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NEWS RELEASE

Oct. 12, 2007

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UM CENTER LANDS GERIATRICS GRANT

MISSOULA –

The Montana Geriatric Education Center recently received a three-year \$1 million grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration. The center, housed at The University of Montana, is part of a consortium that includes Northwest Research and Education Institute in **Billings** and Montana Tech of UM in **Butte**.

The center provides interdisciplinary geriatric education and training for Montana health professionals, higher education faculty and health profession students.

The new grant will increase health literacy of at-risk rural minority elderly in Montana, expand and refine 36 education modules on health care problems in the elderly population, and enhance the Improving Health Among Rural Montanans program, which has conducted thousands of health screenings across Montana since 2002.

MTGEC is the lead player in offering geriatric continuing education in Montana to health care professionals. Sixty-two percent of respondents to the center's ongoing needs assessment rate geriatrics as a high or very high priority for continuing education. Preferred education formats are live conferences, videoconferences and online courses.

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The center's funding was curtailed in June 2006 when Congress failed to fund the 44 geriatric education centers across the country. However, MTGEC was able to use carry-over funding to continue limited operations, including planning its fifth annual conference, which will be held Friday, Oct. 19. The conference will feature lectures in Billings and Missoula, with videoconferencing available from other locales. Visit <http://www.nwrei.org> for information and registration.

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